

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 17, 2004. Claims 1-10 and 32-52 are presented for examination. Claims 1-10 have been amended to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 11-31 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and have been replaced with newly added Claims 32-52. Claims 1, 3, 32, 34, 42, 44 and 52 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

A Claim To Priority and a certified copy of the priority document for this application have been filed, and from the Summary Page of the Office Action, it is believed that those papers are present in the Patent and Trademark Office file of this application. Since the Summary Page does not actually state that those papers have been received, however, clarification is requested in the Examiner's next paper.

In the Office Action, Claims 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 18, 22, 23 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention to the points raised in the Office Action. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-25 and 27-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 6,757,826 (Paltenghe) in view of U.S. Patent 6,209,102 (Hoover), and Claims 6, 16 and 26 were rejected under Section 103(a) as being obvious from those two patents in view of U.S. Patent 5,650,943 (Powell).

As is described in greater detail in the introductory portion of the present application, Applicants intend to provide a system by means of which certain problems commonly encountered in computer security can be overcome. Such problems include the forgetfulness of users, and their consequent tendency to use passwords that are too easy for an unauthorized person to guess. The approach to which the present invention relates is one in which a user provides, not an ordinary password as such, but a sample of handwriting that can be compared to a registered sample to determine whether the user is authorized to access the computer or network, or not.

More specifically, independent Claim 1 is directed to a signature processing method for displaying a signature on a display unit, in which there are performed an inputting step, of inputting a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke, and a control step, of displaying the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke(s) of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke(s) of the signature, while the signature is being inputted via the digitizer.

Paltenghe relates to a system that utilizes a signature in lieu of a password. As the Examiner correctly notes, however, that patent does not teach or suggest displaying the signature in a manner that makes it difficult for others than the user to discern the signature, while the user is able to see it relatively clearly, as claimed in Claim 1.

Hoover relates to a system in which the user obtains access by inputting a password or PIN, and has the option of inputting the PIN or password using a mode in which a plurality of user-selectable fields, the displayed contents of which are in random

order, and the proper values in which are selected by the user. For example, if a six-digit PIN is to be entered, six columns of digits may be displayed, with the digits in a different order in each, and the user selects the first digit of the PIN from the first column, the second from the second column, etc. Because the order of the numbers is different, and in fact is random (or the equivalent), in each column, a near-by person is at least hindered from seeing what numbers are being inputted.

Nonetheless, even if one of ordinary skill could find a way in which to combine the *Hoover* approach with *Paltenghe* (and Applicants do not concede that such a combination could be made, much less that it would lie within the reach of one of merely ordinary skill), the result would not have the feature recited in Claim 1 of a control step that effects the display of a signature being inputted, in such a manner as to make the signature difficult for others to discern while the user is able to discern it.

Indeed, it is not seen how one would go about applying the *Hoover* approach of providing randomized fields in which individual digits of a PIN can be entered, to the entry of a sample of handwriting, as in *Paltenghe*. But even if such were possible, the result would apparently be a system in which the user would be presented with a plurality of fields in each of which it would be necessary to enter a portion of the password (the signature), and so a near-by person close enough to discern the signature if it were made in the ordinary fashion would still be able to see what the user was writing for each portion of the password. The result would not be secure, and would not in any way approach the result provided by Applicants, and recited in Claim 1.

For these reasons, it is deemed to be plain that Claim 1 is allowable over *Paltenghe* and *Hoover*, taken separately or in any possible combination (assuming such combination would even be possible, much less a permissible one).

Each of the other independent claims is a corresponding apparatus, program or memory-medium claim, or otherwise contains features similar to those discussed above with regard to Claim 1, and is deemed allowable by virtue of at least the arguments presented above with regard to Claim 1.

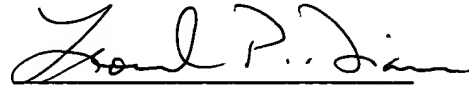
A review of the other art of record, including *Powell*, has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leonard P. Diana", written over a horizontal line.

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